

VZCZCXRO2877
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #2930 2911100
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 181100Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6718
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1396
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3485
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0981
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1897
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 002930

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/18/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EMIN](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- TURBULENCE IN THE HIGHLANDS

REF: JAKARTA 2783

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A tribal clash October 16 left eight people dead in the highlands of central Papua in eastern Indonesia. Police reinforcements have rushed to the area, which is near U.S. company Freeport McMoRan's operations. There are differing versions of what sparked the fighting--which involved bows and poisoned spears--but there are no indications that the turbulence may spread, though the local area reportedly remains tense. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) TRIBAL CLASH: According to media reports, the clash began over a Freeport-McMoRan compensation payment to the family of a dead Papuan. The man allegedly died of injuries he sustained after attempting to climb a fence surrounding the operating area of the U.S.-owned Freeport-McMoRan mining company, reportedly while drunk. The Jakarta Post, citing an anonymous source, reported that Freeport paid an undisclosed amount of money to the man's family as compensation for his death. Some of the dead man's relatives from the Amungme tribe charged that other relatives from the Dani tribe had kept all the money for themselves. The dispute escalated, with combatants using bows and poisoned arrows and spears. The violence resulted in eight deaths and 19 injuries. Over 120 Indonesian National Police (INP) personnel are now in the area and have separated the warring tribes. Police have stopped the violence for now, although the situation reportedly remains tense.

13. (C) FREEPORT'S VERSION: Freeport's Director of Corporate Communications Scott Hanna disputed several key elements of the media reports and said the tribal clash was unrelated to the man's death. He told poloff that a drunken Papuan man trespassed onto Freeport property and attempted to enter a company dining facility, been forced to leave, and had then fallen off a ledge. In any event, Hanna denied that Freeport had paid any compensation to the man's family. He said this most recent clash was one of several over the past few months and was part of a long-standing conflict between the Dani and Amungme tribes. Relations between the two groups have been strained as a result of recent Dani migrations into traditionally Amungme areas, according to Hanna. Many of those Dani migrants are also allegedly involved in illegal gold panning downstream of Freeport's operations (reftel). Freeport operations were not disrupted by the fighting.

14. (C) HIGHLAND FOG: Several human rights groups told poloff

that they were skeptical of the published reports and were investigating the situation. Events in the Papuan highlands, like the mountains themselves, are often shrouded in fog. It may be some time before we have a clear picture of the exact course of events. Even if a clear narrative of events does emerge, groups in Papua will likely continue to provide biased accounts and explanations that support their position in local disputes.

HUME